

# Domaine de Certes et Graveyron



- a - Cenanthe à feuille de Silaus
  - b - Belette
  - c - Tadorne de belon
  - d - Anguille
- Circuit de Certes 9,2 km  
— Boucle de Graveyron 6,2 km

# Domaine de Certes et Graveyron

Audenge - Lanton



## A delicate balance between water and land

**Practical information about the site**

**Reception and information at La Vacherie**

Tél.: 05 56 82 71 79 - 47 avenue de Certes - 33980 Audenge  
 domaine-certès@gironde.fr www.gironde.fr/domainedecertes

**Parking:** Lat: 44°41'34.10»N - long: 1° 1'20.08»O

**Open daily all year round**

10 am - 1 pm and 2 pm - 5 pm from November - March  
 10 am - 1 pm and 2 pm - 6 pm in April, May and October  
 10 am - 7 pm from June - September

Programme of free art and nature events available year-round (booking required)



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## A natural space rich in human history

The Conservatoire du Littoral became the owner of **Domaine de Certes** in 1984, followed by **Domaine de Graveyron** in 1998. Together the two properties form an exceptional natural space which covers 531 hectares, managed by Gironde Departmental Council.



There are traces of a human presence here going back over many centuries, but it was in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century that Certes and Graveyron acquired their current appearance, with the construction of dykes. In Certes, the Marquis de Civrac built dykes on the tidal marshes to create basins and produce salt. Kilometres of clay soil dykes were built by hand, an enormous undertaking which increased the productive space available in the salt marshes, the natural habitat of the “Bassin d’Arcachon”. The salt works soon became unprofitable, however, and were abandoned at the end of the century. The owner of Graveyron had dykes built on his land during the same period but not to produce salt, as he had learned from his neighbour’s experience!

Fish farming gradually developed, with the Certes basins being converted as the salt works disappeared. At the same time, led by Ernest Valeton de Boissière, and later Jean Descas and his son, Camille, Certes came to be a major fish farming, agricultural and forestry estate which would remain productive until the 1960s when the costs of main-



taining the dykes, basins and hydraulic system (30 sluices) heralded the end of the property’s period of production.

Fortunately, Certes and Graveyron are more than just basins and lines of dykes! Foreshore, streams, reed beds, wetlands, deciduous and coniferous woodlands are home to a variety of wildlife. The abundance of the natural environment is due to the presence of salty, brackish and fresh water providing an ideal refuge for birds when the tide is high in the “Bassin d’ Arcachon”.

Nestled in this preserved natural setting is a rich architectural heritage at once bearing witness to the past and looking toward the future.

Graveyron Farm is home to a livestock farmer and his herds of Blonde d’Aquitaine and Bazadaise cattle, and ewes. It also serves as a base for the teams in charge of managing the estate.

The former operations buildings are now used for other purposes. They house the LPO Wildlife Response Centre, the National South Atlantic Botanical Conservatory and a DRAC Conservation and Archaeological Studies Centre.

La Vacherie (the cow barn) is open to the public and an educational team helps visitors discover the site and its history with exhibition areas presenting various aspects of the site.

The Château which burned in 2010 has just been restored and a private operator has been entrusted with an ambitious renovation program to create a tourist project.

Whether alone or on a guided tour, exploring the property provides a unique opportunity to discover a magnificent part of the “Bassin d’Arcachon” in any season. A breathtaking natural space, a transitional area between ocean and land, where man has been active for centuries, seeking a delicate balance between the bounty of nature and its fragility which requires special care.



## Mission of the Conservatoire du Littoral

It helps respond to key societal challenges: preventing the disappearance and deterioration of the natural coastal spaces, a highly sought-after but fragile area.

**Its main objective is acquiring land in order to conserve it forever.**

By purchasing plots of land, the Conservatoire du Littoral invests in the long-term protection of these areas. It restores and develops the sites in order to maintain the biological diversity, beauty, and unique identity of our coasts and open them to the public. This initiative relies on a long-term partnership with local authorities, public institutions, environmental organisations and business foundations.

### The Conservatoire du Littoral in Nouvelle-Aquitaine

The Aquitaine branch is based in Bordeaux and is active in three of Nouvelle Aquitaine’s coastal Departments: Gironde, Landes and Pyrénées-Atlantiques.

A nine-person team works in connection with the establishment’s headquarters based in Rochefort and with the different site managers. This team is responsible for monitoring land availability and acquiring property, and oversees the management of the sites entrusted to its partners in order to protect the coastline and make it available to everyone.

[www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr](http://www.conservatoire-du-littoral.fr)

**In Gironde, the Conservatoire du Littoral and the Departmental Council have been working together to protect natural spaces since 1990.**

The Conservatoire has carried out a land acquisition initiative in line with the Departmental Council’s Sensitive Natural Spaces policy and with its financial support.

This shared approach to the coastline aims to preserve its inhabitants’ quality of life and its natural resources and is accompanied by a public outreach program.



*The activity of the regional branch is supported by the local authorities, especially the Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region, which provides support for its investment programmes and its communication, and the Departments, which participate in acquiring and managing natural spaces.*